

AMENDMENT OF SOLICITATION/MODIFICATION OF CONTRACT				1. CONTRACT ID CODE			
2. AMENDMENT/MODIFICATION NO.		3. EFFECTIVE DATE		4. REQUISITION/PURCHASE REQ. NO.		5. PROJECT NO. (If applicable)	
6. ISSUED BY CODE				7. ADMINISTERED BY (If other than Item 6) CODE			
8. NAME AND ADDRESS OF CONTRACTOR (No., street, county, State and ZIP Code)				(X)		9A. AMENDMENT OF SOLICIATION NO.	
						9B. DATED (SEE ITEM 11)	
						10A. MODIFICATION OF CONTRACT/ORDER NO.	
CODE		FACILITY CODE					

11. THIS ITEM ONLY APPLIES TO AMENDMENTS OF SOLICITATIONS

☐ The above numbered solicitation is amended as set forth in Item 14. The hour and date specified for receipt of Offers ☐ is extended, ☐ is not extended.
Offers must acknowledge receipt of this amendment prior to the hour and date specified in the solicitation or as amended, by one of the following methods:
(a) By completing items 8 and 15, and returning _____ copies of the amendment; (b) By acknowledging receipt of this amendment on each copy of the offer submitted;
or (c) By separate letter or telegram which includes a reference to the solicitation and amendment numbers. FAILURE OF YOUR ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO BE RECEIVED AT THE
PLACE DESIGNATED FOR THE RECEIPT OF OFFERS PRIOR TO THE HOUR AND DATE SPECIFIED MAY RESULT IN REJECTION OF YOUR OFFER. If by virtue of this amendment
your desire to change an offer already submitted, such change may be made by telegram or letter, provided each telegram or letter makes reference to the solicitation and this
amendment, and is received prior to the opening hour and date specified.

CHECK ONE	A. THIS CHANGE ORDER IS ISSUED PURSUANT TO: (Specify authority) THE CHANGES SET FORTH IN ITEM 14 ARE MADE IN THE CONTRACT ORDER NO. IN ITEM 10A.
	B. THE ABOVE NUMBERED CONTRACT/ORDER IS MODIFIED TO REFLECT THE ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES (such as changes in paying office, appropriation date, etc.) SET FORTH IN ITEM 14, PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY OF FAR 43.103(b).
	C. THIS SUPPLEMENTAL AGREEMENT IS ENTERED INTO PURSUANT TO AUTHORITY OF:
	D. OTHER (Specify type of modification and authority)

E. IMPORTANT: Contractor ☐ is not, ☐ is required to sign this document and return _____ copies to the issuing office.

Except as provided herein, all terms and conditions of the document referenced in Item 9A or 10A, as heretofore changed, remains unchanged and in full force and effect.

15A. NAME AND TITLE OF SIGNER (Type or print)		16A. NAME AND TITLE OF CONTRACTING OFFICER (Type or print)	
15B. CONTRACTOR/OFFEROR	15C. DATE SIGNED	16B. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	16C. DATE SIGNED
_____ (Signature of person authorized to sign)		_____ (Signature of Contracting Officer)	

1. **When does the Department of Education anticipate awards will be made for the ED-SAT BPA?**

The current estimated award date is Friday, December 4, 2009.

2. **How many BPAs will be awarded? Will BPAs be awarded to all bidders deemed qualified, or will a limited number of contractors be awarded BPAs?**

Under the MATO program, approximately 150 vendors were awarded a base contract, but many of them never submitted a single proposal. One of the reasons why the ED-SAT will include a more involved evaluation process is to try to eliminate a repetition of that circumstance by only awarding BPAs to qualified, interested vendors. At the same time, ED would like to foster competition by providing robust pools of contractors. For these reasons, there are no set limits to the number of BPAs that will be awarded within a given pool. BPAs will be awarded to the most highly rated offerors in each pool, consistent with the two goals mentioned above.

3. **Is it expected that a portion of the BPAs will be awarded to small businesses? If so, how many BPAs are anticipated to be for small businesses, how many for large businesses?**

As mentioned above, there are no set limits to the number of BPAs that will be awarded to small or large businesses within a given pool. We do anticipate awarding work to small businesses under the ED-SAT. In general, individual requirements will follow the “rule of two:” if two or more qualified small businesses are capable of the work, then the work will be set aside for small business. In answer to the second question, it is very difficult to predict the number of offerors that will respond to this RFP, so no further predictions can be made regarding the relative proportion of small to large vendors in the final pool.

4. **What proportion of all purchase orders are expected to be directed to small business?**

Much like the above question, this sort of prediction is nearly impossible at this point. The best guidance we can offer is that provided in the question above.

5. **Will small businesses only compete for awards with other small businesses?**

Small businesses will be eligible to compete for any purchase order issued under ED-SAT. In addition, when appropriate given the “rule of two,” some purchase orders will be competed among only the small businesses within a given pool, excluding large businesses.

6. **Should small businesses partner with a large business to apply for an ED-SAT BPA?**

Partnering is not recommended for the base BPAs of ED-SAT. If a potential offeror expects to require partnering or subcontracting to fulfill the specific requirements within a pool, that need should be indicated in the proposal, but it is not necessary at this point to specify with whom the potential offeror would partner.

7. **In the Instructions to Offerors under the Past Performance Reports, it is suggested that offerors should include past performance reports provided by agencies for which the offeror performed the work. Can you please provide more explanation as to the nature of these reports?**

What we are referencing here is any official record of past performance measurement provided by an agency as the result of any work provided to that agency (i.e. reports submitted to the Past Performance Information Retrieval System – PPIRS).

8. **Do resumes/CVs count towards the 15 pages dedicated to the Technical Proposal or should resumes be an appendix to the Technical Proposal and not be included in the page limit? What about organizational charts?**

An appendix of up to ten (10) pages can be attached to the Technical Proposal to include CVs and/or organizational charts, in addition to the 15 pages allowed for the Technical Proposal. Please include CVs only at the potential project director/potential lead researcher level.

9. **Does ED require or otherwise suggest a format for CVs included as part of the proposal? What is the suggested length for “condensed” resumes?**

No. We have no suggestion regarding length.

10. **Can firms that qualify as prime contractors in a given pool subsequently partner with other potential subcontractor firms that are not on the list of pre-approved vendors?**

Yes. While we strongly encourage firms bidding as prime contractors for individual purchase orders to partner with other pool members, we understand this might not always be possible.

(Note: this question refers to partnering **after** the time of award of base BPAs. For information regarding partnering at this point, **before** the award of base BPAs, see question 6 above.)

11. **Must a firm be listed as a partner to other prime contractors on the current ED-SAT proposals in order to subsequently be considered as a subcontractor on future competitions?**

See questions 6 and 10, above.

12. **Does ED expect offerors to indicate their methodological areas of experience as well as their substantive areas of experience?**

Yes.

13. **Can tables of staff qualifications be smaller than 12-point font? Can tables and graphics be provided in size 10 font?**

Yes, graphics and tables can be provided in reduced font size, within reason (i.e., no 4-point fonts, and no conversion of the entire proposal to a table to avoid the size limitation).

14. **Are offerors supposed to provide the information identified in Section L.11 (Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)) with this proposal? If yes, should it be part of the business proposal?**

Yes. This information should be included with the Section K Certifications.

15. **In Section L.6, the RFP stipulates that an electronic copy of the proposal must be submitted. Does the Government have a preferred method of submission (email, CD, etc.)?**

The electronic copy shall be submitted on CD, with the hard copies, in a format readable by Microsoft Office or Adobe Acrobat.

16. **In Attachment A, Section V, the last four paragraphs are in bold. Do these apply only to section V.C or to V.A, and V.B as well?**

Yes, these paragraphs apply to *all* work issued under ED-SAT, in each of the three pools.

17. **According to Section L.6, each proposal will require 34 documents (11 copies of the Past Performance Report, Technical Proposal, and Price Proposal, as well as 1 completed Section K Certifications). Is it the Government's intent that we deliver three proposals with separate receipts with each proposal containing 34 separate documents/binders?**

The decision of how to package the proposals is left to the prospective offerors.

18. **Section L.4 seems to require the submission of an ADP Security Compliance plan as part of the proposal. Is this true? Is the plan part of the technical proposal? If so, is it excluded from the page count?**

This provision is included because it will be required in some individual purchase orders.

Submission of this information is not required at this time.

19. **Section L.6 requires the inclusion of resource information, such as data concerning labor hours and categories, materials, subcontracts, etc. in the technical proposal. Since this is a BPA with no hours or materials attached, what hours and materials are we to include in our proposal? Please clarify.**

The requirement here is for generic information regarding staff types, subcontracting needs, etc. Hours will not be required, but information regarding the general structure of the contractor's staff and any identified subcontracting needs (see question 6) should be included.

20. **In the proposal evaluation criteria, sixty points are described, thirty each for technical and past performance. Is this the whole scale? If not, what other elements factor into the evaluation? How does cost factor in? Cost is mentioned as a factor, but not beyond the encouragement to submit competitive pricing.**

As indicated in the Evaluation Criteria document, past performance and technical factors are the primary means of evaluation. Price will be used as a comparative factor, but will not be scored in the same way that the other two factors are scored. The 60 points available for the past performance and technical factors represent the entirety of the scale.

21. **Section F.1 states that the "BPA can be extended indefinitely in one-year increments beyond the base period of performance." However, H.17, 52.217-8, Option to Extend Services states that "The option provision may be exercised more than once, but the total extension of performance hereunder shall not exceed 6 months." Please clarify how long the BPA may be extended beyond the initial 24 months period of performance.**

As in question 18, the Option to Extend Services clause is included in the base BPA because it will be included in individual purchase orders. The extension of BPAs pursuant to FAR part 13 is not an exercise of an option as is usually understood.

The BPAs will be awarded with a two year base period, and can be extended indefinitely beyond that, pursuant to a yearly review, as required by FAR part 13, to determine whether or not the needs of ED are still met by ED-SAT.

22. **Subsection L.6 – Insofar as each part of the proposal is to be “separate and complete in itself,” does this mean that each part of the proposal should be bound separately? Or, can we simply identify each part of the proposal with section dividers and include all four parts and appendices in one document/proposal for each of the pools?**

All parts should be separately bound.

23. **Attachment A - Section VI. Types of Deliverables, Subsection 9. Monthly Reports, requires a monthly report to provide the number of staff hours expended and funding expended by major category, including staff, travel, consultants, subcontractors, and other costs. Since ED will be using fixed price, performance-based purchase orders for tasks funded under the BPAs, why is ED requiring this financial reporting, which would seem inappropriate for FP type agreements?**

The “Types of Deliverables” section is intended only to offer examples of the sorts of deliverables that might be required. While it is correct that many fixed price purchase orders would not require this level of detail, it is possible that for some reason a purchase order would require heightened monitoring. Deliverable requirements for each individual purchase order will be negotiated by the CO awarding that individual purchase order.

24. **The PWS includes “VII. Equipment” and “VIII. Performance Measurement Systems” that list contractor requirements. Do these requirements need to be addressed specifically in the technical proposal? If so, is this content included in the page limitations?**

The extent to which these requirements are met by an offeror should be addressed within the page limits, yes.

25. **Regarding BPA Pool A: Are policy analyses and studies to be conducted under this pool only for federal-level staff, policies, or programs? This has implications for descriptions of relevant project work under this subcategory. For example, would relevant experience under this pool include projects that address policy analysis for state agencies or foundations?**

Offerors should not assume that all work will involve federal-level staff, policies or programs. While such work will constitute a majority of the requirements within pool A, work at other levels that is relevant to the required competencies should be included.

26. **We note that “quality of experience” is one of the evaluation criteria associated with past performance (see page 1 of Proposal Evaluation Criteria). However, many of our projects do not have past performance reports created by the agency for which the work was performed. Will this be viewed negatively by ED? Will other demonstrations of quality be accepted? If so, please provide examples.**

As noted in the Instructions to Offerors document, each project abstract shall include contact information for an individual who can provide feedback regarding past performance on that project. In addition, other demonstrations of quality will be evaluated if included.

27. **In the Proposal Evaluation Criteria (Attachment B), “amount of experience” specifically mentions contracts with the Department of Education and other agencies or “work in the private sector.” Please confirm that work completed with grant funds (e.g., from the National Science Foundation) will be included in evaluations of experience.**

Yes, any work relevant to the competencies required for work within a given pool will be included.

28. **Please clarify if the “past performance reports provided by the agencies” are to be included in the 20 page limitation for the Past Performance Report section of the proposal. Can the Contractor Past Performance Reports be included in an appendix?**

Agency Contractor Past Performance Reports should be included as an appendix to the proposal Past Performance Report, and will not be counted against the page limit.

29. **Does ED require or otherwise suggest a specific format for project abstracts included in the Past Performance Report?**

No.

30. **The Past Performance section states that the Past Performance Report should “include the amount of work (number of projects)” relevant to the pool. We have many relevant projects. In light of page limitations, we see two options: 1) omit abstracts for some projects included in the count of projects relevant to the pool, 2) omit projects from the count and abstracts that may be relevant but not of highest significance. Are both approaches acceptable to ED? Does ED prefer one approach over the other?**

Follow the second approach. Anything listed as part of the project count should be detailed in the Past Performance Report. This is a limiting factor designed to highlight only the most relevant work.

31. **The Past Performance section of the Instructions to Offerors document also states that the Past Performance Report should include “the type of work.” Please define “type of work.”**

See question 12 above: the type of work involves the substantive and methodological factors involved in a given project.

32. **Is there a suggested set of labor categories and accompanying definitions to use in constructing labor rates? Should we use the previously generated list of positions made available by ED for MATO to assemble the cost proposal?**

No. The list of labor categories should be based on an offerors own description of their staff. This relates to question 19, where the general structure of the staff is requested as part of the Technical Proposal.

33. **In the 3rd paragraph of the Price Proposal section, it states that “the most competitive proposals will demonstrate a commitment to ED through the use of discounted rates.” However, the 4th paragraph states “Offerors should not assume that a percentage-based fee will apply.” Please clarify if this means that the loaded labor rates should include a discounted fee from what might normally be included in a fixed price agreement? Or should the fixed-price rate include any fee at all?**

Construction of individual labor rates should include profit calculated as part of that rate, and that is the area where the suggestion regarding discounts is relevant. The 4th paragraph refers to other potential contract incentives (including incentive fee and award fee) which will be negotiated when appropriate on an individual purchase order basis.

34. **What backup is required for the information provided regarding labor rates?**

Information regarding the various cost elements (including profit, G&A, overhead, etc.) that make up the total rate should be included. Specific supporting documentation (e.g., payroll stubs) is not required at this time.

35. **How should other direct costs be addressed in the price proposal?**

As stated in the Instructions to Offerors document: “Offerors should therefore construct the Cost Proposal as a “catalog,” including a line item for each potential category of supply or service necessary in the completion of work in accordance with the PWS.” This includes other direct costs.

36. **My firm is planning to submit a proposal for a BPA within a given pool, but we have also been asked to partner with another firm as part of their proposal. Is this allowed?**

See questions 6 and 10 regarding subcontracting and partnering.

37. **Under the last solicitation (MATO), there was a heading under a section that was called “Provide support on an as-needed basis” and it included things like translation and interpretation, and other specialized skills. Under the new solicitation, and under Technical Assistance, translation and interpretation is no longer called for. I was wondering if the evaluation for these skills will be considered again for this effort too and can be considered for that specific BPA pool.**

As you’ve noted, translation and interpretation, as well as other services listed under category E of the MATO solicitation have not been included in the ED-SAT. Much of this work has been eliminated from the ED-SAT because of overlap with other contracting options, including the GSA Federal Supply Schedules. It is no longer included in our streamlined vehicle.